



Knowing Your Students

Why go this route?

- Because not “leaving children behind” means starting where they are.
- Because some children's need for a particular style or condition is intense enough to be a matter of psychological health and positive self-esteem and can either block or slow learning.
- Because intrinsic motivation is more powerful than external rewards... and honoring a child's preference for communication style is deeply satisfying and motivating.
- Because starting with individualized knowledge of learners is fundamental to good instructional practice.
- Because commitment to a standards-based curriculum is not enough without skilled, professional instructional judgment to tailor it to individual learners.

You'll know you've arrived when...

- You can map your students' preferences, interests, styles and temperaments.
- You've discussed learning differences with your class, listened to their self-descriptions and looked for ways to accommodate their styles.
- You have a tool for “teaching around the wheel” which recognizes the full spectrum of preferences and needs... and you use it when you start to plan lessons and units.

Construction Zone

- This is the second of six steps in a full instructional design and delivery cycle outlined in MI-Map packets. See Packets 5:1 to 5:6 for the others.



- This packet will help a teacher get a “fix” on the needs of learners in a given classroom. A full-staff retreat 2-4 weeks into the year would let teachers confer with previous teachers about their kids' styles.



It's about TIME

- Step 2 requires classroom observation time. An aide, a counselor or a principal could take the class while the teacher makes notes.
- Steps 3 & 4 might each take 20–90 minutes of class time depending on grade level.
- Step 5 is teacher planning that might benefit from full staff or grade-level discussion with each teacher's observations in hand.




Potential COSTS

- No identifiable costs.

The Process

*A step-by-step guide
to knowing your students
well enough to design
instruction for them.*

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

- 1 Get an introduction to “temperament”** as a tool for describing personality preferences, or decide on another descriptive framework if you prefer.

INSERT A for Step 1 offers an introduction to “temperament” and the Resource page on the back of this wrapper suggests several resources for learning more.

- 2 Observe your students’ behaviors**, and make notes about what seems to be each child’s preference.

INSERT for Step 2 offers a worksheet on which you can locate students’ names or note behaviors that match the clues about what to look for if you’re using “temperament” as a descriptor.

MI-Map Packet 3:3 “*Strengthening Teacher-Student Relationships*” offers other observational and activity techniques for getting to know your students individually and closely. Gather in all the data you can collect about who these learners are, and use it to “map” your students on the temperament framework or another one of your choice.

- 3 Ask your students to self-describe** their own temperaments.

INSERT A for Step 3 offers one way of soliciting information that would help you to identify students’ preferences. INSERT B is an interactive story designed to spark discussion about preferences in a way that elicits temperament information. If it works well for you, buy the book *Type Tales* from the source on the resource page for the complete set. Certified MBTI users and True Colors consultants can also suggest a number of ways to introduce students to the concept of understanding preferences as a bridge across differences.

- 4 Look at class patterns of temperament.** Read and discuss your students patterns with your own peers until you have lots of specific examples of how all types are needed for a well-rounded team or class. Then plan a discussion with students.

One activity for helping students see and hear differences more clearly is to ask groups of students who share a temperament to make lists of what they like and don’t like (in school, in friends, etc.). The idea is for each group to exaggerate their preferences and then listen while all groups report out. Talk about how school would look if that group were “in charge”.

Another activity for exploring differences involves stepping INTO each other’s preferences temporarily. Declare a whole morning “Blue Day” and have everyone learn like the Blue group prefers. Talk about how it felt to those with other preferences. The next day is “Orange Day” etc.

- 5 Reflect about Lesson and Unit planning**, and how you might take the whole range of needs into account as you choose instructional activities.

Alice Terry calls this “Teaching Around The Wheel” because it plans FOUR kinds of activities each time a learning task is involved. This turns out to have a hidden instructional advantage since children need to change activities frequently to stay engaged. INSERT for Step 5 is a planning tool that you could pick up any time you plan a lesson or unit... to jog your thinking. Start in the quadrant most familiar and natural to you and develop a learning activity, but then STRETCH yourself to add three other kinds of learning activities.

Getting more mileage from knowing your students better

How knowing your learners well enough to design instruction for their needs benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- NCLB mandates that results of annual assessments be disaggregated by poverty levels, race, gender, ethnicity, migrant status, disability and limited English proficiency. Reports will indicate clearly if any subgroup fails to make adequate yearly progress. To insure that all his students are prepared for state expectations, each teacher must know every student's unique story—where does she come from, what is his family like, what can she do, and what skills do they bring to the classroom?

Education YES!

- Indicators of instructional quality include: Teacher Quality and Professional development, Extended Learning Opportunities, Arts Education and Humanities for All Students, and Advanced Coursework. This series of MI-Map packets will help implement a systematic way of inviting an entire staff to reflect on its instructional design and delivery practices... and to develop action plans for self-directed change. After completing these packets, the staff will have a more complete picture of the school's children and the many subgroups within the school's population. Staff will be prepared to adjust instructional practices to meet individual student needs. They will also have data to contribute toward the school's self report of Performance Indicators.



Resources

Books

Understanding Yourself and Others: An Introduction to Temperament

Linda V Berens. Telos Publications, Huntington Beach, CA 92605. 2000. Phone: 714/668-1818

An information-packed 40-page booklet that outlines many of the needs and predictable stressors for each temperament, with suggestions for responses. Great for classrooms.

True Teaching Action & Communication Guide

True Colors Communication Group. 2001. 866/810-7800. truecolors.org

This quick reference guide offers ideas about how to approach kids with different temperament preferences in classrooms or one-on-one about behavior, academics, personal questions or other topics.

Type Tales

Diane Ferris. Center for Applications of Psychological Type, 414 Southwest 7th Terrace, Gainesville, FL 32601. Paperback.

The sample story we include as INSERT B (for helping students identify temperaments) came from this great book. Buy it to get the whole set. \$12 on-line at www.capt.org/catalog/getitm2.cfm.

People

Specialists

Most Intermediate School Districts have a specialist working with instructional design and delivery in their service areas.

Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc can recommend certified facilitators who administer and interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). Contact them at:

800/624-1765

www.mbti.com

Coaches

The *Alliance for Building Capacity in Schools (ABCS)* website lists coaches whose training has been provided by Michigan State University and supported by the Michigan Department of Education. Some are experienced in working with instructional design in Michigan schools. Please visit:

www.abcscoaches.org

For more information, contact

Office of School Improvement
Michigan Department of Education
517/241-4285

Resource Person for Instructional Design and Delivery series of packets

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Assemblies and Presentations

www.truecolors.org
Phone: 800/422-4686

Elementary and secondary assemblies offer interactive introductions to the idea of difference as an exciting and interesting element in relationships. Included in the \$800 fee are materials for 100 kids to self-describe by choosing their strongest color (temperament).

Michigan True Colors Contact

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